

VIA FACSIMILE (703) 872-9306

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PATENTIN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A system for limiting outward movement of a slide-out shelf, wherein the shelf includes at least one stop tab, said structure comprising:

a plurality of side supports configured to support the shelf, each said side support comprises a ledge comprising a clearance portion, said clearance portion comprising a horizontal aperture;

a plurality of support members configured to rigidly connect said side supports and contact at least a portion of the shelf thereby blocking forward movement of the shelf;

a plurality of gussets extending inwardly from each of said side supports; and

a gusset tab extending upwardly from each of said gussets and aligned substantially vertically below said horizontal aperture of said clearance portion, said gusset tab configured to contact a ~~portion~~ the stop tab of the shelf thereby blocking further forward movement of the shelf.

2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented) A system in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said portion of the shelf comprises at least one of a forward stop tab and a rear tab, whereby said tabs are at least one of integral and unitary.

4. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 3 wherein said rear tabs extend longitudinally.

5. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 3 wherein said forward stop tabs extend laterally outward from said shelf.

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6. (currently amended) A system in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said gussets and said gusset tabs are integral, said gussets extend laterally inward from said side supports.

7. (currently amended) A system in accordance with ~~Claim 3~~ Claim 1 wherein each said clearance portion comprises a width providing a clearance for ~~said forward tab~~ the stop tab.

8. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 7 wherein said side support ledges each further comprise a rear portion and a forward portion, said rear portion having a width greater than a width of said forward portion, said forward portion providing a clearance for said rear tab.

9. (currently amended) A method for assembling a shelf assembly, said method comprises:

providing a shelf including at least one forward tab and at least one rear tab extending outwardly from the shelf;

providing at least one side support configured to support the shelf, the side supports include at least one side support clearance sized to receive the forward tab, at least one gusset extending inwardly from each of the side supports, wherein the at least one gusset includes a gusset tab extending upwardly from the gusset and aligned substantially vertically below a corresponding side support clearance, and at least one support member configured to rigidly connect the side supports and configured to contact the forward tab when the shelf is in a first extended position; and

slidably coupling the shelf to the side supports.

10. (original) A method in accordance with claim 9 wherein slidably coupling the shelf to the side supports further comprises coupling the shelf to the side supports such that the shelf extends outward in a first direction and retracts inward in a second direction opposite the first direction.

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11. (original) A method in accordance with claim 10 wherein slidably coupling the shelf to the side supports further comprises extending the shelf outward till the forward tabs contact the gussets and at least one support member such that additional outward linear movement is prevented.

12. (previously presented) A slide-out shelf assembly comprising:

a shelf comprising a first side, a forward tab laterally extending a first distance from said first side, and a rear tab laterally extending a second distance from said first side, said second distance less than said first distance; and

a first shelf side support comprising a laterally projecting ledge for sliding engagement with said shelf first side, said side support further comprises a plurality of support members rigidly connecting said first shelf side support to a second shelf side support and configured to contact said forward tab when said shelf is in a first extended position, said projecting ledge comprising:

a rear portion having a first width sufficient to retain said rear tab; and

a forward portion having a second width less than said first width and providing a clearance for said rear tab and further providing a clearance for said forward tab, said clearance having a third width providing a clearance for said forward tab.

13. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said second width is sized to retain said forward tab when said forward tab is positioned in said forward portion.

14. (previously presented) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 13 wherein said forward and rear tab extend laterally outward from said shelf first side, and said first side support ledge extends laterally inward over said forward and rear tab when said shelf is in a retracted position.

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15. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said shelf forward tab is configured to be forward of said ledge rear portion and under said ledge forward portion when said shelf is in a fully extended position.

16. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 15 wherein said rear tab is configured to be under said ledge rear portion when said shelf is in said fully extended position.

17. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 15 wherein said shelf forward tab is configured to be forward of said ledge rear portion and under said ledge forward clearance portion when said shelf is in a release position.

18. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said rear tab is configured to be forward said ledge rear portion when said shelf is in said release position.

19. (canceled)

20. (previously presented) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 12, wherein said support member is configured to prevent said forward tab from moving forwardly from said first extended position until a forward edge of said shelf is raised.

21. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said shelf comprises a refrigerator shelf.